

Human Right to Water

AB 685, 2012 (Eng)

“... every human being has the right to safe, clean, affordable, and accessible water adequate for human consumption, cooking, and sanitary purposes.”

California Water Code Sec. 106.3

Challenges in Disadvantaged Communities

- About 7,500 public water systems in California.
- About 500 of these are small public water systems that do not meet safe drinking water standards.
- Unknown number of very small (<15 connection) systems & domestic wells that likely do not meet drinking water standards.
- Many residents of these communities pay high rates for contaminated tap water.
- Many small water systems lack the capacity to operate their systems at affordable rates.

Affordable, Safe Drinking Water (ASDW) Concept

Maintain existing systems where feasible:

- Provide technical & financial assistance
- Fund infrastructure
- Incentivize or require **consolidation** (physical or managerial) of systems not independently sustainable

Consolidation Trailer Bill Language

- Drought trailer bill language proposed to allow State Water Board, subject to many conditions, to require extension of service or consolidation
 - Serve drought-impacted communities
 - Serve disadvantaged, unincorporated communities or mutual water companies
 - Encourage voluntary consolidation first
 - Consult with and coordinate with LAFCOs, counties, and more
 - Provide capital improvement funding to consolidated system
 - Provide liability relief to consolidated system

Affordable, Safe Drinking Water (ASDW) Concept

Where maintaining existing systems or consolidation is not feasible, use state-contracted resources to operate and maintain “batches” of systems that do not meet standards:

- Fund O&M to guarantee affordable rates
- Funding source TBD
- Funding would sunset after ten years
- Achieve economies of scale and provide affordable, safe water
- Goal of progress towards Human Right to Water